

These notes refer to the Environmental Better Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016 (c.13) which received Royal Assent on 11 April 2016

Environmental Better Regulation Act (Northern Ireland) 2016

EXPLANATORY NOTES

BACKGROUND AND POLICY OBJECTIVES

3. The Act is a key element of the Department's Regulatory Transformation Programme. The overall aim of the Programme is to provide a more streamlined and effective regulatory system for businesses and regulators.
4. Over many years environmental legislation has become unnecessarily complex and fragmented which in turn has resulted in increased burdens on businesses regulated under the legislation.
5. The policy underlying Parts 1 and 2 of this Act has resulted from extensive stakeholder engagement between businesses, regulators and environmental groups. During such consultation many businesses criticised environmental regulations, and regulation itself, for being complex, inflexible, incoherent and time-consuming to understand. The lack of integration between environmental permits and the resource intensive nature of complying with multiple, un-coordinated inspections were identified as regulatory burdens, particularly by small/medium sized business, hindering them from doing business.
6. The policy intention aligns with the Executive's Programme for Government priority of growing a sustainable economy and investing in the future by having a simpler, harmonised and easier to understand regulatory framework. It also supports the Executive initiative "Building a Prosperous and United Community" which refers to the need to reduce regulatory burdens and red tape for businesses.
7. [Parts 3, 4 and 5](#) of the Act contain miscellaneous amendments unrelated to Parts 1 and 2:
 - to amend the Clean Air (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 to streamline the procedure for authorising fuels and for exempting fireplaces under the provisions of that Order;
 - to amend the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 to remove the requirement on district councils to make a further assessment of air quality under Article 13 of that Order;

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- to amend the Water and Sewerage Services (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 to transfer responsibility for the regulation of drinking water quality for public supplies from the Department for Regional Development to the Department of the Environment.